DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 214 435 HE 014 851

AUTHOR	Murphy, Carol
TITLE	Integrating the Community and the Classroom: Instructors Describe the Results.
INSTITUTION	Far West Lab. for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco, Calif.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Nov 81
NOTE	26p.; For related documents, see ED 206 244 and HE 014 853. This report is an outcome of the project "Experience-Based Education Implementation Research."
AVAILABLE FROM	National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, Suite 601, 1735 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006 ($15.00).
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Career Planning; College Faculty; College Programs; Cooperative Education; *Educational Benefits; Education Work Relationship; Experiential Learning; *Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; *Humanities; School Business Relationship; School Community Relationship; *Social Sciences; *Student Development; Student Experience; *Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

The views of faculty members from postsecondary institutions in California, Utah, and Nevada regarding the impact of field-based courses in the humanities and social sciences were surveyed. The 68 respondents were interviewed regarding the perceived impact of the course on the instructor, the institution, the community, and students. The faculty members reported that teaching an experience-based course has helped them acquire certain facilitative techniques for counseling or group discussion and also develop some community-related skills, such as recruiting and monitoring field placements. Instructors received few tangible rewards or incentives for teaching the course, but felt they derived more personal satisfaction than from their other courses. All teachers intended to continue teaching their experience-based courses and some planned to expand their effort by increasing the enrollment, expanding the scope of the course, or by adding new field sites. The students reportedly acquired a variety of process-related and task-specific skills that helped them synthesize their prior learning and relate it to practical applications at the workplace. The experience-based course also helped students develop their interpersonal skills, gain self-confidence, and develop a professional manner. The field component gave students the opportunity to make contracts in community agencies and to refine their career focus. Some students received jobs as a result of their field placement, and the course also helped some student decide against entering a chosen profession. (Author/SW)

ED214435

Integrating the Community and the Classroom: Instructors Describe the Results

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NE 014851

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FAR WEST LABORATORY FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

This report is an outcome of the project entitled "Experience-Based Education Implementation Research."

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The project presented or reported herein was performed pursuant to a grant from the National Institute of Education, Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the National Institute of Education, the Department of Education, or the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, and no official endorsement by these agencies should be inferred.

November, 1981

ABSTRACT

This report is an outcome of a study conducted by Far West Laboratory on the implementation of experience-based courses at selected postsecondary institutions. The study has three objectives: (1) to describe postsecondary courses in the humanities and social sciences that include a field learning component; (2) to identify factors that impede or facilitate the implementation of field learning activities; and (3) to determine the impact of these courses, as perceived by the instructors, on the students, instructors, community agencies, and educational institutions. This report summarizes the data for the third study objective.

Project staff interviewed 68 faculty members from postsecondary institutions in three states. Faculty responses to the interview questions are presented here in two parts: (1) the impact of the course on the instructor, the institution, and the community and (2) the perceived impact of the course on the students.

The instructors reported that teaching an experience-based course has helped them acquire certain facilitative techniques for counseling or group discussion and also develop some community-related skills, such as recruiting and monitoring field placements. Instructors receive few tangible rewards or incentives for teaching the courses, but feel they get more personal satisfaction than from their other courses. All the instructors intend to continue teaching their experience-based courses and some plan to expand their effort by increasing the enrollment, expanding the scope of the course, or by adding new field sites.

The students reportedly acquired a variety of process-related and task-specific skills that helped them synthesize their prior learning and relate it to practical applications at the workplace. The experience-based course also helped students develop their interpersonal skills, gain self-confidence, and develop a professional manner. The field component gave students the opportunity to make contacts in community agencies and to refine their career focus. Some students received jobs as a result of their field placement.

INTEGRATING THE COMMUNITY AND THE CLASSROOM: INSTRUCTORS DESCRIBE THE RESULTS

Many humanities and social science departments in postsecondary institutions now offer one or more courses with a field learning component. The type of field activity varies according to the subject matter of the course, the students' level, and available community resources. These courses have two learning sites--the classroom and the community--and two learning facilitators--the instructor and the placement supervisor. This blending or mixing of learning environments and teaching styles provides an opportunity for students to apply their classroom learning and to diversify their learning styles. But at the same time, the need to perform successfully in two different learning situations can be a source of role conflict for the students. "As interns the students need to be active, productive, and, in some cases, authoritative. The student role had usually involved being passive, receptive, and submissive to authority."[1]

According to Hursh and Borzak the extent to which students achieve a reconciliation of this role conflict will help determine their success at the agency and the degree of self-confidence they develop. And the classroom instructor, as a facilitator of the students' learning, helps effect this reconciliation by ensuring that the students' classroom role is not passive or submissive, but rather active and self-determined. The instructor can promote student involvement as well as student responsibility for learning by including in the course certain

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[1] Barbara A. Hursh and Lenore Borzak, "Toward Cognitive Development through Field Studies," Journal of Higher Education, 50:1, 1979, p. 75

activities, or portions of activities, that are student-directed. This condition of shared involvement and responsibility for the learning environment affects the instructor as well as the students. Sharing control of the classroom with students and including field-based activities as well may require the instructor to learn some new skills or behaviors.

In a study completed last year, Far West Laboratory examined the role of the teacher as facilitator and developed a set of teacher training materials that contained descriptions and examples of the functions of planning, monitoring and evaluating in experience-based courses.[2] It became clear, as a result of this work, that in addition to preparing for a role as a teacher facilitator, instructors needed information about how to design and implement field-based courses and how to integrate field learning activities into their existing course. They were interested in knowing what had worked for other instructors, what problems they could anticipate, what the "costs" in terms of time and resources would be and what benefits they could expect for both themselves and their students.

In order to provide this information to instructors and administrators, Far West Laboratory conducted a second study, an exploration of field-based courses currently being offered in the humanities and social science curricula of post-secondary institutions in California, Utah, and Nevada. This one-year study was not a comprehensive survey of course offerings, but rather a close examination of a few selected courses to provide descriptive data on their structure, the teacher/student roles, implementation problems and requirements, and the results and benefits. The designated information source for both the course description and the implementation and outcome data was the instructor. Project staff

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[2] C. Lynn Jenks and Carol Murphy, Experience-Based Learning and the Facilitative Role of the Teacher (San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1980).

subsequently conducted personal interviews with 68 faculty members at six postsecondary institutions in California, Utah and Nevada.

This current study was guided by three study objectives: (1) To describe postsecondary courses in the humanities and social sciences that include a field learning component; (2) To identify factors that impede or facilitate the implementation of field learning activities that augment or reinforce classroom-based activities; and (3) To determine the impact of these courses, as perceived by the instructor, on the student, instructor, community agencies, and educational institutions.

Method

The interview questions corresponded to the study objectives and focused on the following:

- The demographics of the course
- The structure of classroom and field activities
- The goals of the course
- Individual roles and responsibilities
- The attitudes, skills, and resources required to teach the course
- The problems, issues, or suggestions for implementation of the course
- The perceived impact of the learning experience on the student, instructor, institution and community agency
- The potential for expanding this approach in the future

The interview questions were open-ended, e.g., what do students do at the field site; what are the criteria for selecting resource sites; what changes have been made in the course; what are the biggest problems in teaching the course. This approach corresponded to the project's intent to collect descriptive rather than empirical data. It was not the focus of this inquiry to evaluate any of the learning activities, but rather to offer information to postsecondary

administrators and faculty that would help them design their own activities, alert them to potential implementation problems, and acquaint them with the outcomes and rewards experienced by other faculty.

The faculty responses cited in this report were neither prompted by the interviewer, nor were they pursued by follow-up questions. One difficulty in not offering sample responses, particularly for the implementation and impact questions, is that the data are likely to reflect only the instructors' most current area of interest without putting it into perspective by relating it to other issues, past or present. Taken separately, then, the responses are best viewed as spontaneous and valid indicators of the instructors' current perspective.

Another difficulty with the open-ended approach is that the lengthy explanation or narrative required to answer many of the questions may have prompted more "no response" answers than if short answers had ben provided. The interview was 1 to 1-1/2 hours long, and many of the questions required careful thought and a lengthy reply. Interviewers reported that while some instructors were eager to give a lengthy descriptive account of their course, they offered no response to some of the specific implementation and impact questions.

The interview questionnaire was structured in three parts corresponding to the data required for the three study objectives: (1) descriptions of course structure and procedures; (2) identification of key implementation factors; (3) description of impact of the course.

The data obtained from these interviews has been made available in three separate publications. The first, entitled A Sampler of Postsecondary Courses, contains descriptions of 86 courses, including information about the demographics of the course, the goals, implementation requirements, and teaching and learning processes associated with both the classroom and community-based learning

components. Sample forms or course syllabi contributed by the instructors are also included in this publication.[3]

A second publication, Implementing at the Postsecondary Level, summarizes the interview data relating to successful implementation of community-based learning activities.[4] The impact of these experience-based courses on the instructors, students, community agencies and personnel, and the educational institutions is the subject of this, the third publication.

The sole source of the data reported here is interviews with faculty. Neither input nor verification was sought from students, supervisors, or administrators. The faculty responses are based on their perceptions of the course's impact, which in some cases are supported by written feedback or student evaluation forms.

The responses obtained from these interviews could easily form the basis of another, broader survey. That survey would ask instructors to select or rank order a series of given items identified in the current study.

The course impact and results are reported here in the hope that this information will help instructors anticipate some of the problems and rewards of teaching a field-based course. In addition, these data could point out areas for further, more specific inquiries regarding the impact of certain particular teaching/learning processes or the acquisition of certain skills. This inquiry would include observations made at both the classroom and the field learning

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[3] Carol Murphy and Lynn Jenks, Integrating the Community and the Classroom: A Sampler of Postsecondary Courses (San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1981).

[4] Lynn Jenks and Carol Murphy, Integrating the Community and the Classroom: Implementing at the Postsecondary Level (San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1981).

sites and interviews conducted with students and site supervisors as well as with faculty.

This report is divided into two parts. The first discusses the impact of the course on the instructor, the institution, and the community. Instructor responses to the following questions are presented:

- Have you developed any new skills as a result of teaching this course? If so, what?
- Does the amount of personal satisfaction you get from teaching this course differ from other courses?
- Do you receive extra salary or a reduced teaching load for teaching this course?
- What is the impact of this course on your colleagues, the administration, and the community?
- Do you have an interest in expanding this approach?

The second part summarizes the instructors' perceptions of the impact of the course on the students in terms of (1) cognitive skills, (2) personal growth, and (3) career focus.

PART ONE: IMPACT ON FACULTY, ADMINISTRATION, AND COMMUNITY

QUESTION: HAVE YOU DEVELOPED ANY NEW SKILLS AS A RESULT OF TEACHING THIS COURSE?

Of the 48 instructors who responded, 28 said "yes" they had developed new skills and described a total of 42 "new skills" to the interviewer. Most instructors listed more than one item, but only 10 skill items were mentioned by more than one instructor. They included:

- Putting control in students' hands
- Developing community contacts
- Dealing with small groups
- Dupervising
- Dealing with site supervisors or agencies
- Patience to permit students to proceed at own pace
- Knowledge about agencies
- Facilitating discussions
- Problem solving with students
- Appreciation of curricular problems

It is clear from this list of "skills" that instructor responses also included new attitudes and behaviors. Most of the skills cited were facilitating or interpersonal skills, such as "dealing with small groups," "facilitating discussions," or "problem solving with students." Some were related to tasks involving community agencies or site supervisors. Others, such as "appreciation of curricular problems" or "patience," were not so much skills as they were aspects of personal or professional growth.

We grouped the 42 random responses by similarity into the following general categories:

17 Facilitator techniques (e.g., counseling, facilitating discussion, evaluating, getting students to share experiences)

12 Personal/professional growth (e.g., teach more effectively, understand young people, develop frustration tolerance)

9 Community-related skills (e.g., ability to match agency with student, develop contacts, deal with supervisors)

4 Subject-related skills (e.g., appreciate related content areas, learn to set type, help think through theory)

The surprisingly low number of subject-related skills mentioned may have to do with the instructors' interpretation of the word "skill" in the question. Perhaps they were distinguishing "skill acquisition" from "knowledge acquisition," and associated subject-related skills with the latter rather than the former. In any case, it is clear that the "new learning" for these instructors is related to two prominent features of field-based learning--increased student control and liaison with community agencies.

QUESTION: DOES THE AMOUNT OF PERSONAL SATISFACTION YOU GET FROM TEACHING THIS COURSE DIFFER FROM OTHER COURSES?

Of the 54 instructors responding to this question, 36 said "yes" the amount of satisfaction differed, and 18 said "no" the amount of satisfaction was the same for all their courses. Thirty-two of the 36 "yes" respondents said the satisfaction was greater than for their other courses and four said it was less. One of the reasons cited for the course being less satisfying was the number of administrative tasks involved; another was that instructors found this course less "intellectually stimulating" or "intellectually absorbing."

Some of the reasons mentioned for deriving more personal satisfaction include:

- More personal contact with students
- One of few ways academic world relates to the community
- Opportunity to see students grow and mature
- Contact with a superior group of students
- Seeing students become work-oriented and aware of career opportunities

As with the previous question on skill development, most of these responses reflect the instructors' awareness of and reaction to those aspects of field

learning that are new to them and probably require extra effort on their part, specifically increased personal contact with students and increased student participation in all phases of the learning process as well as some interaction with supervisors and agencies in the community. As evidenced by the 59% positive responses to the question, this extra effort was rewarded by greater personal satisfaction on the part of the instructor.

QUESTION: DO YOU RECEIVE ANY PRACTICAL BENEFITS SUCH AS A REDUCED TEACHING LOAD OR EXTRA SALARY FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE?

The almost unanimous response (50 of 52 instructors) to this question was "no." In fact, two instructors reported receiving no teaching credit at all for the field-based course. They were teaching it in addition to a regular load. For most instructors the course counted as a regular course even though they often spent more time on it than on their other courses.[5]

The additional time was spent in student conferences and in follow-up with the field sites. Class preparation time was sometimes less for these seminars than for their other courses. But for the most part, an increase in student-directed activities does not correspond to a decrease in the instructor's time required to teach the course.

A few instructors received some credit for "other activities" on their promotion or tenure report. In most cases, however, the only rewards for their efforts were the new learning and personal satisfaction mentioned above.

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[5] Jenks and Murphy, Ibid. p. 6.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THIS COURSE ON COLLEAGUES, ADMINISTRATION, AND THE COMMUNITY?

Although most instructors had not formally solicited feedback on the course from university and community groups, they had received some informal comments about the course. The feedback from their colleagues was reported by most (37 of 52 respondents) to be "supportive" of their efforts. "Supportive" means that the courses are recommended to students by other faculty and advisors or that some faculty have requested information about designing or implementing a field-based course. Usually, however, the "generally supportive" attitude of the faculty is more of a passive interest than a motivation to try this approach themselves. Some instructors reported an indifferent attitude on the part of other faculty or administration, and only one cited a negative reaction to the courses, which stemmed from a belief that field-based instructors do not have as much to do as other instructors.

Although the administration was also reported to be "supportive," the nature of that support was again described as passive and often subject to being influenced by current institutional politics and enrollment trends. Instructors felt that the level of enrollment in the course influenced administrative feedback. If enrollment was low, the administration was less supportive than when the course attracted large numbers of students. Administrative reaction was also influenced by the students' accomplishments. Well-documented or well-publicized student products, community service, or academic achievement contributed to departmental or university-wide recognition of a program or course.

The community response to field-based courses was reported to be overwhelmingly favorable. The agencies involved appreciated the services offered and valued the link with the university. Several instructors cited evidence of this

positive response in letters they have received, in monetary donations to their program, and by the repeated requests they have received for student interns. The only negative comment was that there could be some conflict with agencies or professionals in the community who see intern service as competing with their own commercial endeavors.

QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN EXPANDING THIS APPROACH?

This question elicited an interesting diversity of responses. Thirty-one teachers said "yes," and 21 said "no." For the most part, however, the no's were not philosophically opposed to expansion of the field-based approach. In most cases, they cited practical reasons for restricting expansion, e.g., not enough community sites to accommodate more students, no more courses needed in the department.

Comments by those instructors planning some kind of expansion included ways to enlarge a current course; to add a second, similar course; to integrate parts of a course into other courses; to enlarge a course into a program; or to offer it through other departments or to additional levels of students (e.g., lower-division undergraduates). One way of expanding a course was to make it a required course in the curriculum. This would increase the number of students, the number of agencies, and usually the number of faculty teaching the course. It might also require a coordinator if the number of students became large enough.

Some instructors did not want to expand, but did intend to change the course. They wanted to update the content, to seek more concrete evaluation of student performance and course impact, or to introduce a new component such as a pre- and post-practicum workshop for students.

This question served as a sort of "bottom line" inquiry to the instructors. They had previously detailed the problems and the rewards involved in teaching a field-based course and this question invited them to reflect on their commitment to experiential learning by indicating its role in their future plans. All the instructors expressed an interest in continuing with their present level of involvement, and many have found ways to add new dimensions to the existing course.

PART TWO: IMPACT ON STUDENTS

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE COURSE ON STUDENTS IN TERMS OF COGNITIVE SKILLS?

Forty-eight instructors offered responses to this question which we then grouped by similarity into the following four categories:

12 Specific subject matter (e.g., museum procedures, historic preservation, archaelogy techniques, publishing, editorial skills, perspective on content, intensive kwowledge of problem area)

12 Job or career related skills (e.g., how an agency runs, bureaucratic functioning, appropriate behavior, resume writing and interviewing)

13 Transferable or "adaptive" skills (e.g., counseling, research, problem solving, listening, critical skills)

11 Integration or synthesis of content and process (blend academic and real; evaluate theoretical knowledge in practical setting; apply classroom learning)

There are a couple of interesting points about these responses. First, no instructor mentioned the acquisition of <u>new</u> conceptual or theoretical material--all new subject matter knowledge and skills were related either to <u>processes</u> (i.e., how campaigns are run, how to plan and implement a program) or to the <u>application</u> of theory. While these outcomes are consistent with the course objectives--students are expected to gain "practical" knowledge or to test out the theory in practice--the acquisition of new content or the revision of the knowledge base is also a valuable and ongoing part of the learning process.

None of the instructors mentioned that students revised their theoretical constructs as a result of their field experience. Students "applied" or "integrated" theory, but what happened when the field learning did not reinforce or verify the theory or concept? This process of theory modification often helps

students extend their knowledge base and gives them new theoretical material to test in the field.

The instructors' responses show that they see these courses as advanced, upper division courses and that students have already acquired a conceptual base and are now expected to test out or apply their classroom and textbook learning. Most of the courses profiled in this study were upper division courses that had been designed as "integrating" or "culminating" learning experiences for senior students. But holding this place in the curriculum only serves to underscore the need for learners at this level to make use of all four modes of learning as described by Kolb: concrete experiences followed by adequate reflection, leading to concept formation and selection of new experiences to further test concepts.[6]

If the instructors feel that the students' new learning happens outside the classroom, where theory is applied, it raises the question of what learning and what teaching takes place in the seminars? What role does an instructor play in the integration of theory and practice and in the development of new cognitive skills? And what, if any, learning opportunities do students lose as their learning becomes more self-directed?

Our question only touched the surface. It defined several categories of skills that instructors see students acquiring in field learning courses. A more detailed study, including field and classroom observations, would be needed to determine how and where this learning takes place.

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6 David A. Kolb, "Learning Styles and Disciplinary Differences," The Modern American College, Arthur Chickering, ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981), pp. 232-255.

QUESTION: WHAT IMPACT DOES THIS COURSE HAVE ON STUDENTS IN TERMS OF PERSONAL GROWTH?

Interviewers recorded 52 responses to this question. In an attempt to group them into meaningful categories, we made a frequency word count of all responses. The result showed that three words figured prominently in the instructors' responses: (1) interpersonal skills, (2) self-confidence, and (3) professionalism. Fifteen instructors mentioned growth in the students' interpersonal skills, which they described as an ability to work with others in the field, to learn about themselves in terms of group roles, to examine relationships in depth, and to handle positive and negative feedback from the group. Twelve instructors cited increased self-confidence as an aspect of the students' personal growth. One instructor described how the students developed confidence: "In this learning environment, students are encouraged to experiment, to practice, and the results, successful or not, help the students realize that they can do things themselves and that both their ideas and their efforts have value."

Eight instructors noted that students were helped to develop their professionalism through their field experience. In their words, the course "puts you out there to represent yourself in a professional manner;" "helps students with professional goals;" "helps develop professional attitudes."

Another aspect of personal growth that was mentioned by nine instructors related to the idea of self-understanding. The comments by the instructors were that students "learn about themselves in terms of the world of work;" "ask who and what am I;" get "more in touch with their own creativity;" and "explore their value base." Other important "growth traits" that were frequently mentioned included maturity, leadership, discipline, and responsibility.

According to these instructors' observations regarding their students' personal growth, it would be fair to say that students enrolled in these courses

could expect to increase their interpersonal skills, to increase their self-confidence, to learn more about their own values, and to develop professional goals and attitudes. The instructors' evidence for their statements is based on their perceptions of students' behavior patterns, the kind of feedback they have received from students either formally on course evaluations or informally in conference, the type of professional positions the students obtain and the feedback from the agency supervisors.

As with the previous question, this exploratory inquiry raises several questions that could be pursued in a follow-up study that (1) included student perceptions and focused on student attitudes and self-assessment prior to taking the course, (2) determined the relative influence of interpersonal and environmental factors in the learning process, and (3) investigated the relationship of this particular learning environment(s) to the development of certain personal traits and generic skills, such as problem solving, critical thinking, and communication.

QUESTION: WHAT IMPACT DOES THIS COURSE HAVE ON STUDENTS IN TERMS OF CAREER FOCUS?

Forty-six out of 49 respondents felt that their field-based course helped students make career decisions. Two instructors said the students were already committed to a career so the course did not help and one said the students' experiences in this course were too limited to influence their decision. They did not get "an overall view."

Three of the ways that instructors felt their course helped students establish a career focus were:

1. An opportunity to make contacts in the field;
2. Exposure to opportunities available; and
3. The chance to have a trial experience before final commitment to a particular field

The specific way the course helped individual students depended on the purpose of the placement, that is, whether the experience was intended as a general career exploration, an orientation to a particular field, or an investigation of a specific job or career. The impact of the course in terms of career focus also varied with the level of commitment the student had already made to a career. Many of the students were senior level or even graduate students who were finishing their program of study with a practicum. Their career decision was pretty firm. Even with these students, however, the course helped sharpen their focus on areas within their chosen field. It also gave them a trial experience before graduation. And sometimes the students even decided not to pursue their chosen career: "some decide to leave the field;" "some get disillusioned;" "it helps them firm up a commitment or they get out." The course, then, either reinforced a student's intention to follow a particular career and provided some practical experience, or it helped the student redefine a future career area before graduating and applying for a job.

SUMMARY

Impact on the Instructor. Instructors report that as a result of teaching a field-based course they have gained expertise in certain facilitative techniques, such as counseling or group discussion. They also report the development of community-related skills, such as liaison with agencies or supervisors to develop new contacts and to monitor student placements.

Instructors of field-based courses receive few tangible rewards or incentives for teaching these courses even though they usually spend more time on them. However, most instructors (59%) feel they get more personal satisfaction from teaching these courses than from their other courses. They value the increased personal contact with students, the interaction with professionals in the community, and the chance to help students become aware of career opportunities.

The response to the course by their colleagues, the administration, and the community has been generally positive and supportive. Although the nature of the support from colleagues is passive and that of the administration is often contingent on political factors, the feedback and reinforcement from the community has been consistently favorable and, in many cases, well documented.

All the instructors interviewed intend to continue teaching the course and some plan to expand it. Expansion ideas include enlarging the enrollment or scope of the current course; adding a second, similar course; integrating parts of the course into other courses; or making it a required course. One of the limitations to the growth of this or other fieldbased courses is the lack of appropriate community sites; another is the natural limitation imposed by departmental size and number of students. Lack of interest on the part of the students was not cited as a limiting factor. Instructors reported that student enthusiasm and support for these courses is very high.

Impact on Students. The impact of the course on the students is reported here only in terms of the instructors' perceptions. The instructors were asked to describe student outcomes in terms of cognitive skills, personal growth, and career focus. The students' cognitive learning outcomes described were process-related rather than content-related skills, skills that deal with the application of theory rather than the revision of theory or the learning of new theoretical material. These outcomes are consistent with the learning goals of the courses, which specify the acquisition of certain work-related skills. These may be either task-specific skills or generalized transferable skills, such as critical thinking or problem solving. Our interview data showed that the instructors' perception of the content for field-based courses is that it supports the students' practice or experience at the site by offering a forum for reflection and an opportunity to synthesize prior learning.

This raises the question as to whether the experiential component is, in fact, being included at the expense of some of the more traditional learning objectives that are discipline-related. Does the emphasis on job-related skills and the integration of theory and practice replace the introduction of new theoretical material? To put it in terms of Kolb's four part learning cycle, do these courses include only the "concrete experience" and "reflection" stages, or do they also encompass the "concept formation" and "further testing" aspects? Investigation of these questions was beyond the scope of this exploratory study.

In terms of personal growth, the instructors reported that the course helped their students (1) develop interpersonal skills, (2) gain self-confidence, and (3) develop a professional manner. Almost all instructors felt the course had an impact on the students' career focus. Since this was usually a major goal of the course and an important outcome for the students, it is not surprising that students made contacts in the field and sometimes even got jobs at

their field placement sites. But according to the instructors, the course also helped some students decide against entering a chosen profession. This trial experience, then has the potential for either reinforcing or changing a career goal.

All of the above results for students are in line with the instructors' expectations and the goals of the courses.

Implications for Practice or Further Research. These instructor responses to questions about the results of teaching a field-based course have implications for faculty or administrators interested in planning or participating in such a course. Faculty can expect to spend more time with students and to develop certain facilitative and community-related skills. Faculty and administrators can also recognize from this data that there will be limitations to the growth of the course and also that changes will need to be made to keep the course current, to keep quality placements, and to recruit new ones as needed.

The data obtained for all three study objectives reinforced the idea that there are many ways to implement experience-based learning activities. There was no standard set of goals for the courses although many of the courses do have some similar objectives and similar reported outcomes. One of the common threads in this pattern is the emergence of the student as an independent learner who experiences the potentially conflicting roles of student and worker and uses the dual learning environments and the resources associated with each to reconcile these roles and make a more effective school-to-work transition. To facilitate this transition students reportedly acquire expertise in career-related skills and transferable or adaptive skills, which will make them more competitive on the job market and at the same time help them to synthesize their prior and current academic learning with the practical application of theory.

The outcomes of this descriptive study could form the basis for either a follow-up inquiry with a larger sample of instructors or an investigation of a certain aspect of the learning process or the learning environment that merits more in-depth inquiry. For example, this study elicited instructor testimony to the effect that certain skills are acquired by students in field-based courses, which help them become more employable. However, we do not have evidence for this claim. Some questions for further investigation might be: What conditions of the learning environment(s) lead to the acquisition of these skills? Do employers really value these skills? What is the instructor's role in helping students acquire these skills?

EDUCATION, WORK AND PRODUCTIVITY

This publication is a product of the Laboratory's Department of Education, Work and Productivity. The mission of the Department is to improve the preparation of individuals to deal with the complex and changing conditions they face in trying to achieve a life of productive activity and personal fulfillment. The social sciences have documented the compelling reality of such problems as unemployment and underemployment, declining growth in productivity, inequities of employment practices, job dissatisfaction, mid-life career and job changes, and the changing character of work. The Department addresses such issues through research, translation of findings into practical educational applications, and through technical assistance to educators and others who share our concerns.

The Education, Work and Productivity Department is one of six established by the Laboratory's Board of Directors in 1978, and focuses on four program priorities: (1) Preparing youth for transition to adulthood; (2) Understanding the consequences of our changing economic context; (3) understanding individual and societal needs for satisfaction and productivity; and (4) Understanding adult transitions and their effects on satisfaction and productivity. These priorities help shape the ongoing programs and projects of the Department, and guide the Laboratory in its search for resources and support.

Most of the Department's current programs and projects deal with the youth-to-adulthood transition, with emphasis on employability and its development. All of its programs seek improved linkage between educational and employing institutions. Programs designed to improve school practice are patterned after the Far West Laboratory model of Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE), developed in the early 1970s with funding from the National Institute of Education. In EBCE, youth engage in non-paid individualized learning projects at work sites, with guidance, help and encouragement from adult volunteers at the site. Members of the school staff monitor and coordinate community-based learning activities with the rest of the youth's school program to ensure completion of graduation requirements. The outcomes include greater awareness of career options and improved work maturity.

EBCE has been adapted for programs operated by CETA Prime Sponsors and community-based organizations. In these, the learning project may lead not to high school course credits, but rather to the building of an experience portfolio for use in obtaining a job. Programs of experience-based learning have also been developed for postsecondary institutions, using liberal arts courses as the context in which adult students plan and carry out projects that combine career exploration with real-life application of academic subject matter.

These programs have been installed in communities nationwide, and the Department staff has conducted related research on how such programs can help various special populations find meaningful roles in the adult working world. These include the use of experience-based learning processes with the handicapped, ethnic minorities, delinquent youth, and women re-entering the job market.

The Department also engages in policy-related research on such employment and productivity problems as the changing work ethic, the characteristics of employability, the development of work maturity, and the role of the adult mentor in the workplace.

Inquiries about the work and products of the Department are welcome and should be addressed to:

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